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explains that Jesus read the superficial nature of the belief in him at this time, and would not commit himself to these people for their co-operation in working out his messianic vocation, because they were accepting him as Messiah without the necessary radical change of conception as to the essential nature of the kingdom which Jesus came to inaugurate.

Hebrew Ideals as Exhibited in the Stories of the Patriarchs.

An admirable statement of the earlier religious and ethical ideals of the Hebrew people is given in Mr. Strachan's volume, *Hebrew Ideals*, in the series of "Handbooks for Bible Classes." The narratives in Genesis are to a large extent transcripts from a vivid oral tradition, the author says. In times when there was no written word in Israel, tradition was the medium of religious instruction in Hebrew homes. The Divine Spirit made the recital of the sacred stories the means of arousing in the hearts of the young a living interest in the ancestral faith. The old traditions were necessarily recast and amplified again and again in accordance with the advancing requirements of successive ages. When a sacred writer undertook to collect these traditions and weave them into a continuous narrative, he was animated, not by an antiquarian or æsthetic, but by a religious, motive. The moral and spiritual interest predominated in his mind. As a man of prophetic spirit, mastered by great religious convictions, he sought to give his people spiritual light and leading by exhibiting to them a divine pattern of faith and duty; and for this purpose he used the sacred traditions which lay ready to his hand, modifying and supplementing them according to his prophetic principles. Genesis contains not merely the roots, but the flowers and fruits, of Hebrew faith. The patriarchs are not inferior to the prophets of the eighth century B. C. in purity of religious insight and inward spiritual piety.

Sacred history was prophecy teaching by example. The patriarchal stories are a series of character-studies, an unsurpassed gallery of portraits, and the study of character is the primary task of the reader as of the writer. Truth is made most attractive when it is embodied in concrete forms. The word must be made flesh, and dwell among men. It is not beautiful abstractions, but good and true men and women, warm and pulsing with humanity, that win our affections. They allure us to whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. In Genesis there is no need for moralizing or appealing or

exhorting, for the story does its own work, the characters speak for themselves, and the moral effect is all the greater.

Spitta's View of the Epistle to the Romans.

Professor Friedrich Spitta, of the University of Strassburg, in his recent elaborate study of Paul's epistle to the Romans, divides the letter into two original letters, the first and earlier one comprising 1:1-11:36; 15:8-33; 16:21-27; the second, 12:1-15:7; 16:1-20. Both are addressed to gentile readers, except the passage 1:18-2:29, which is a later addition and has Judaism in mind. The home-circles and small communities mentioned in the letter existed then at Ephesus, but not at Rome. Also individuals are addressed who have never lived at Rome, showing confusion on the part of the author, if the present letter was an original unit. Paul could not send greetings to Rome until he himself had been there. Spitta therefore dates the later of the two letters, in which these salutations are found, in the second imprisonment of Paul, and argues that the social, historical, and religious requirements of this material are satisfied in this period, but not elsewhere.

This hypothesis is subjected to a somewhat severe criticism by Dr. Wilhelm Bahnsen, in the *Protestantische Monatshefte*, Heft 9, 1902, who thinks that the theory contains inconsistencies and makes improbable reconstructions of the history involved. Spitta's work is, however, deserving of a more patient and scholarly consideration; for, while his views may not be the correct ones, it must be recognized that there are unsolved historical problems in the epistle to the Romans, and serious attempts to solve these problems should be gratefully received.